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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage December 16 on cross-Straits relations; on Taiwan's dropped ranking in the Climate Change Performance Index 2010; on President Ma Ying-jeou's recent interview with the "Wall Street Journal"; and on amendments to the Act Governing Food Sanitation that concern the import of U.S. beef products, which will be reviewed by the Legislative Yuan on December 18. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" discussed President Ma's recent interview with the "Wall Street Journal" and said it revealed Ma's goal of ultimate unification with China. A column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed U.S.-China-Taiwan relations and said the G2 is the new and most popular term coined following the rise of China, and it is difficult to tell now whether Washington and Beijing will become friends or foes. End summary.

A) "Who Is Creating the Conditions for Taiwan to Be Annexed?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] editorialized (12/16):

"... Even though the Presidential Office clarified yesterday that that what President Ma said during his interview with the Wall Street Journal was that 'whether there will be reunification as expected by the mainland side depends very much on what is going to unfold in the next decades' rather than 'the next decade,' Ma's remarks have again given him away by revealing his [goal of] ultimate unification [with China].

"In fact, the serious mistake that Ma has made in his remarks is not about the difference between the next 'decade' or 'decades'; instead, it is about the fact that Taiwan is already an independent sovereign state, and regardless of whether it is called the Republic of China or Taiwan, its independent sovereignty is already an undeniable fact. In this vein, be it the next decade or several decades, for Taiwan, there will never be such a question of unification [with China]. For a long time, the so-called 'unification' has been a synonym for China's attempt to annex Taiwan. Likewise, cross-Straits relations are nothing but [a noun] depicting a geopolitical status. Words such as 'relations between two nations' are the term that can accurately define the state-to-state relations between Taiwan and China. Ma's second mistake lies in the fact that Taiwan's future can only be determined by the 23 million Taiwan people, not jointly by the 1.3 billion people in China. Since Taiwan and China are two separate nations, Taiwan's destiny, without a doubt, should be controlled by the Taiwan people themselves; Chinese people have no authority to join in making such a decision. Besides, if [Taiwan's future] were to be jointly determined by the 23 million [Taiwan] people and 1.3 billion [Chinese] people, it will only be a plight in which the Taiwan people will be trampled underfoot by China. ..."

B) "In U.S.-China Relations One Can Hardly Tell Friends from Foes"

Taiwan's former Ambassador to South Africa wrote in the "Hall of Fame" column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation:

120,000] (12/16):

"The biggest change to international relations in the 21st century is the rise of China, and the watershed marking such a change was [U.S. President Barack] Obama's state visit to China from November 15 to November 18. Obama and Hu Jintao, in their capacity as state leaders of two superpowers, signed a magnificent, over-three-thousand-character 'Sino-U.S. Joint Statement.' ... Since both countries are in possession of the world's largest nuclear arsenals, international experts generally believe that it will benefit both sides if China and the United States can work together, and both will suffer if they clash against each other. The most popular noun coined thereof is G2. ... These experts believe that from now on, only these two superpowers are able to dominate the destiny of the world; nothing really counts without the go-ahead from Beijing and Washington. ...

"Even though Washington's current policy toward China is full of verbal flattering, in reality it sets up a lot of restrictions. The only exception is Taiwan, the once-named 'unsinkable aircraft carrier.' For Washington, Taiwan no longer has its strategic value, and this is the reason why the United States is happy to see both sides of the Taiwan Strait ease their tensions, increase dialogue and exchanges. If the DPP were still in power, it would become a burden to the United States instead. The United States' new 'island frontline' now ranges from Japan, Guam, going south to Australia, with Okinawa as its protruding forefront and several South Pacific islands benefiting from such an association. ... "

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